



## Arizona Department of Gaming

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### **VIDEO, PHOTOS AVAILABLE**

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### **Agents Search Illegal Poker Room Tied to Ex-Justice of Peace**

#### **AZ Department of Gaming, Tucson Police Execute Warrants**

PHOENIX — The Arizona Department of Gaming and the Tucson Police Department have executed a search warrant on an illegal poker room in Tucson linked to a former Maricopa County Justice of the Peace. The owners of the poker room and others are being investigated by the Arizona Department of Gaming on felony charges of running an illegal gambling operation in violation of state law.

The Arizona Department of Gaming and the Tucson Police Department executed a search warrant this morning on the "Club Royale Card Room," located at 2665 N. Campbell Avenue in Tucson. The Club Royale poker room is owned by Donna Rogers and Johnny Ray Rogers of Tucson. The Rogers' Tucson homes were also searched today by Department of Gaming Special Agents and Tucson police officers.

Agents and officers seized poker tables, chips, an ATM cash machine, video surveillance equipment, gaming records, and other items.

The Rogers, a married couple, are the owner-operators of Club Royale. The couple paid a portion of their weekly illegal gambling proceeds to Harold Lee, a former Maricopa County Justice of the Peace. Lee, a resident of Tombstone, is also involved with other illegal card rooms in Phoenix and Surprise. Lee is attempting to set up a "franchise" of illegal poker rooms in Arizona.

With the exception of regulated casinos, poker rooms are illegal in the state of Arizona.

Tucson's Club Royale mimicked a professional casino card room. The Club had eight poker tables, with room for nine players at each table. Paid dealers dealt out the cards. There were video

surveillance cameras directed at the tables to monitor the players. Players bought poker chips from a cashier's "cage" area in the Club. An armed uniformed security guard kept watch over the Club.

Club Royale took a fee from players on each hand of poker they played, and gave 15 percent of that money per week to Lee. Charging players a fee to play makes the game illegal because "the house" receives a direct profit from the games. Club Royale sometimes took in more than \$550 an hour from one table alone, and pulled in customers late into the night and early morning. Club Royale had its own ATM cash machine so player wouldn't have to leave the building to ante up more money for bets.

The Club also charged players an annual \$20 membership fee, all of which went to Lee. The Rogers also paid a \$5,000 "franchise" fee to Lee.

"Harold Lee and his cohorts attempted to expand their criminal enterprise into a network of illegal gambling halls throughout Arizona," said Paul Bullis, Director of the Arizona Department of Gaming. "These were not casual poker games among friends," Bullis said. "The Rogers and Lee and others were running an illegal gambling business for illicit profit."

If "the house" or host of a poker game gets a cut of the players' money, the game is illegal gambling under Arizona law. If the host charges players any type of entry fee, membership fee or players fee, or accepts any portion of the players' money, the game is illegal.

In a purely social poker game, players bet among themselves, and the host doesn't make any profit from the players.

The search warrants on the card room and the two Tucson residences are the culmination of the Department's undercover investigation of Club Royale. Arizona Department of Gaming and Tucson Police officers posed as poker-playing Club Royale patrons. The probe of Club Royale began in July 2008, soon after it opened. The Department's investigation into Lee's activities is continuing.

Video footage and still photos of Club Royale, and a copy of the Department of Gaming investigative report will be posted on the Arizona Department of Gaming website: [www.azgaming.gov](http://www.azgaming.gov).

To arrange a Department of Gaming interview in Phoenix, please contact Seena Simon, Arizona Department of Gaming, (602) 604-1801 x206, cell (602) 653-6968, [SSimon@azgaming.gov](mailto:SSimon@azgaming.gov).

To arrange an interview in Tucson, please contact Tucson Police Department Public Information Officer Sgt. Fabian Pacheco (520) 791-4852.

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